

# FOREST FRAGMENTATION

Forest fragmentation is the conversion of large contiguous areas of forest into relatively small patches of forest and non-forest in ways that reduce or eliminate the ability of the forest to provide ecological, economic, and social benefits. The factors contributing to forest fragmentation are widespread, making it important to consider all sides of this issue.

## Some Reasons to Plan for Forest Continuity

- A clear plan for preserving forest continuity will prevent haphazard development, which fragments forests and disrupts the health of forest ecosystems.
- More people are purchasing forestlands for home sites, which means an increased threat of forest fragmentation through the establishment of infrastructure associated with residential needs, such as roads and utilities.
- Development from urban areas is encroaching into forested areas, which can affect forest management practices and the ecology of forest ecosystems.
- Large contiguous areas of forest provide scenic landscapes and corridors for wildlife habitat.
- Larger blocks of forests are less susceptible to diseases.

## Tools to Address Forest Fragmentation Across All Elements of Your Comprehensive Plan

- Use available forestry data and maps to assess forests and the role they play in your community.
- The Managed Forest Law has the potential to sustain large blocks of forestland because it provides forest landowners, who own at least 10 acres of forest, reduced annual property taxes by deferring a portion of the balance until the harvest under a forest management plan.
- As a goal of your community's plan, make maintaining and enhancing forest continuity a priority.
- Work with local organizations to acquire development rights on important forestland, such as through the use of conservation easements, transfers, or purchases.



For more planning tools go to the  
**Smart Forestry for Smart Growth  
Planner's Toolbox**  
on the web at



<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/SmartForestry>